

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-07

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DRAFTED BY EB/CBA/BP:HJWINTER:VJW

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ARA/MEX - ESHIPPY

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P 042201Z APR 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EIND, ETRD, BEXP, MX

SUBJECT: TEQUILA

1. BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND FIREARMS (BATF) HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH MEXICAN TRADE INSTITUTE IN WASHINGTON SINCE JULY 1974 ABOUT OBTAINING VIEWS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO (GOM) ON BATF STANDARDS OF IDENTITY FOR TEQUILA.

2. TO DATE GOM HAS NOT RESPONDED. BATF HAS NOTIFIED DEPARTMENT THAT UNLESS IT RECEIVES SOME "POSITIVE INFORMATION" FROM GOM WITHIN 30 DAYS FROM APRIL 3, BATF WILL UNDERTAKE OVERALL REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF STANDARDS OF IDENTITY OF TEQUILA.

3. BATF WANTS TO KNOW WHETHER, IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT TEQUILA IS NOW RECOGNIZED AS A DISTINCTIVE PRODUCT OF MEXICO, THE GOM WOULD PERMIT THE FOLLOWING OPERATIONS WITH RESPECT TO TEQUILA: (A) TAX EXEMPT RECTIFICATION

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WITH COLORING, FLAVORING, AND BLENDING MATERIALS, WHETHER

OR NOT SUCH ADDITION IS WITHIN THE TWO AND ONE-HALF PERCENT BY VOLUME AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE FEDERAL ALCOHOL ADMINISTRATION ACT; (B) THE USE OF CARAMEL FOR COLOR ADJUSTMENT IN THE BOTTLING OF TEQUILA; AND (C) THEMINGLING OF TEQUILAS PRODUCED BY DIFFERENT DISTILLERS. IN ADDITION,

BATF WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER THE GOM WOULD BE AGREEABLE TO THE IMPORTATION OF "WHITE" OR UNAGED TEQUILA INTO THE U.S. IN BULK AND THEN AGED IN OAK BARRELS IN THE U.S., AND SUBSEQUENTLY BOTTLED AS "GOLD TEQUILA".

4. BATF RECOGNIZES THAT GOM MAY NOT REPEAT NOT WISH TO AGREE TO ALL OR ANY OF THESE OPERATIONS. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THE GOM RESPOND TO BATF REQUEST FOR GOM VIEWS ON POSSIBLE OPERATIONS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH 3 ABOVE.

5. CESAR LARRANAGA, DIRECTOR OF THE GOM BUREAU OF STANDARDS, TELEPHONED WINTER (EB/CBA/BP) ON APRIL 4 AND SAID HE PLANNED TO COME TO WASHINGTON ABOUT APRIL 16 OR 17 AND WOULD REMAIN HERE ABOUT ONE WEEK. HE ASKED WINTER TO ARRANGE APPOINTMENTS WITH APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS (A) MEXICAN REQUEST FOR REDUCTION OF U.S. TARIFF ON TEQUILA AND (B) ABOVE-MENTIONED BATF REQUEST FOR GOM VIEWS ON STANDARDS OF IDENTITY FOR TEQUILA. LARRANAGA ALSO ASKED BATF BE INFORMED THAT HE MAY WISH TO APPEAR AT A BATF HEARING ON INGREDIENT LABELING ON APRIL 16.

6. AS BACKGROUND FOR HIS DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON ON PARAGRAPH 3 AND PARAGRAPH 5 ABOVE, WINTER URGED LARRANAGA TO MEET WITH ROBERT KOHN AT THE EMBASSY.

7. DEPARTMENT WILL KEEP EMBASSY INFORMED ABOUT ANY DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDING APPOINTMENTS FOR LARRANAGA. INGERSOLL

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